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10 February 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Fire Protection at the Test Site

- REFERENCES :
- a. Memorandum for Project Director, same subject, dated 13 Oct 55.
 - b. Memorandum for Col R. A. Merg, subject: "Air Force Support Personnel Requirements for Project", dated 18 Oct 55.
 - c. Memorandum for Project Director, subject: "Fire Crew for Watertown Strip", dated 27 Jan 56.

1. In reference c we indicated a course of action calling for Agency recruitment of civilian firemen for the Test Site. Since the date of this memorandum, we have thoroughly investigated the possibilities of this recruitment and are forced to the conclusion that the recruitment of civilian-type firemen for Watertown is impractical from a recruitment, billeting and financial point of view.

2. The Agency has had considerable experience with recruitment of this category of personnel for various training areas, and this category of personnel has proved to be an extremely difficult one to cope with, dealing as it does with a very limited number of personnel. Attempts to hire firemen under regular employment procedures, i.e. as general schedule staff employees, has resulted in a morass of conflicting policies, exorbitant administrative problems connected with the maintenance of pay records and hours of employment, and security complications arising from complaints by individual firemen to Congressional sources, etc. Work schedules for firemen seem to revolve around established work weeks of 60, 72 or 90 hour work weeks; generally 40 hours of this is considered to be basic work time with subsequent time being paid as overtime, at the rate of one and one half times the basic rate, plus any necessary night differential. Questions of stand-by time versus actual on-duty hours, leave accrual based on this lengthened work week concept, and charges to annual leave necessitates a very close bookkeeping procedure. We are also informed that difficulties experienced by the Agency, [redacted] are similar to those experienced by service installations in the same general area.

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3. We have been advised that any attempts to recruit firemen should be based on a specific personnel services contract which would attempt to clearly define the rate of basic pay, plus an agreed upon percentage differential which would cover overtime, plus explicit leave accrual and leave charges in the event of absence. To write such a contract to cover the Watertown situation, we would get into problems involving the contracting party (Air Force, CIA, ABC !); the special billing problem at Watertown (it is considered impractical to follow normal 24-hour on-duty and 24-hour off-duty concepts); and necessary separation from dependents during the period of service at Watertown. This problem, although certainly not insoluble, is an extremely difficult one for CIA to work out at Watertown.

4. The question of duration of a contract enters into any recruitment proposal. Present planning is based on the eventual CIA phase-out from Watertown in the late fall of 1956, at which time it is anticipated that the Air Force might continue the operation of Watertown. It is considered practically impossible to secure services of qualified firemen for any period short of a year, and this raises practical questions as to the desirability of a contract of this length being entered into at this time.

5. Our sources of recruitment of firemen are basically the following:

a. Qualified service personnel being separated at separation centers.

b. Firemen of local fire departments - probably in cities in the southwestern United States. This category of personnel is normally engaged under local Civil Service procedures and a high degree of security is normal for firemen employed by a local government.

c. Personnel now working for service installations as firemen - again probably in the southwestern part of the United States.

6. Considering all of the above, we have come to the conclusion that the direct employment of civilian personnel for our purposes is impractical. 19

7. On 8 February, Colonel Ritland, [redacted] and the undersigned discussed fire protection with [redacted] Lockheed. Lockheed has agreed to continue their present fire crew at Watertown through the end of June 1956. In line with this agreement it was felt that we should once again call upon the Air Force for nominations of qualified fire fighting personnel for clearance and assignment to Watertown as an Air Force fire crew.

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8. On 9 February, [] and the undersigned discussed the problem with Colonels Berg, Geary and []. It was agreed that qualified firemen can be nominated by the Air Force and arrangements (as yet not decided) can be made for the administrative assignment of such personnel to Waternoom. It was pointed out, however, by the Air Force that it will be next to impossible to provide firemen who meet current security requirements as now laid down for assignment to the 1007th AIBG. We agreed to discuss the security criteria with appropriate security personnel in the Project with a view towards the setting of a more relaxed security criteria for such category of personnel. We believe that firemen do not necessarily have to be fully witting of the Project and can be considered more or less in the same light as AIBGO employees now utilized as housekeeping personnel on the Base.

9. We propose that suitable criteria be established by the Office of Security which will permit the Air Force to request the major commands to submit nominations of qualified personnel for eventual use as Waternoom fire protection crews. We informed [] that we would communicate this criteria to him as soon as the appropriate decision has been made.

Personnel Officer

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